

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 14481 092039Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5389

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR

SUBJ: BREZHNEV ON STAGE

1. BREZHNEV HAS PARTICIPATED IN FIVE PUBLIC OCCASIONS
IN LAST SEVERAL DAYS -- EACH GIVEN LENGTHY COVERAGE
ON LOCAL TV -- ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE CEREMONIES FOR
HONECKER (BREZHNEV RODE TO AND FROM AIRPORT WITH HIM
AS WELL) TALKS WITH HONECKER; KREMLIN RECEPTION
AT WHICH BREZHNEV READ TOAST WHICH LASTED HALF HOUR;
AND SPEECH AND ATTENDANCE AT LENGTHY CELEBRATION
OF 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF ACADEMY OF SCIENCES. ON ALL
OCCASIONS MEDIA IMAGE HAS BEEN OF AN ACTIVE AND BUSY
LEADER. WESTERN DIPLOMATS WHO HAVE SEEN HIM AT CLOSE
RANGE HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY HIS GAIT AND DEMEANOR AS
WELL AS HIS OVERALL PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND RELATIVE
CLEARITY OF SPEECH. HIS PRESENT PERFORMANCE IN THIS
REGARD IS FAR SUPERIOR TO THAT NOTED DURING HIS
HELSINKI SPEECH OF JULY 31. HOWEVER, A CERTAIN ELEMENT
OF STAGE MANAGEMENT MAY BE PRESENT SINCE MOST OF
BREZHNEV'S PUBLIC APPEARANCES HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY
SHORT AND HAVE NOT THEREFORE POSED A DRAIN ON HIS
STAMINA. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF BREZHNEV WERE IN
UNUSUALLY BAD CONDITION, AS HAS BEEN STATED IN
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RECENT WESTERN PRESS STORIES, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT

HE WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO OUTSIDE VIEW, EVEN OF SUCH DEPENDABLE SATRAPS AS HONECKER, STOPH AND SINDELMANN. IN ANY CASE, SOVIET MEDIA AUDIENCES WOULD CERTAINLY GAIN IMPRESSION OF ACTIVE LEADER VERY MUCH IN CHARGE OF THE USSR.

2. NEVERTHELESS, OUR IMPRESSION THAT BREZHNEV'S STAMINA IS STILL LIMITED WAS REINFORCED BY HIS ABSENCE FROM EAST GERMAN RECEPTION OCT. 7, DESPITE FACT THAT PRAVDA REPORTED HIS ATTENDANCE. WE ASSUME THAT BREZHNEV WAS HUSBANDING ENERGY THAT EVENING AFTER HIS SPEECH AT ACADEMY OF SCIENCES JUBILEE SINCE HE SAW OFF GDR DELEGATION ON FOLLOWING MORNING AND SEEMED IN EBULLIENT SPIRITS. ON THAT OCCASION EXCHANGE OF THREE KISSES WITH HONECKER SQUARE ON THE MOUTH SUGGESTS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT HE IS NOT CURRENTLY SUFFERING FROM ANY COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.
STOESSEL

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